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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.

4247.11

Total Pages in this Submission

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

Box Patent Application

Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

Enhanced Video Programming System and Method for Incorporating and Displaying Retrieved Integrated Internet Information Segments

and invented by:

Craig Ullman, Jack D. Hidary, and Nova T. Spivack

If a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☒ **Continuation** ☐ **Divisional** ☐ **Continuation-in-part (CIP)** of prior application No.: 09/472385

Which is a:

☒ **Continuation** ☐ **Divisional** ☐ **Continuation-in-part (CIP)** of prior application No.: 09/109945

Which is a:

☐ **Continuation** ☐ **Divisional** ☒ **Continuation-in-part (CIP)** of prior application No.: 08/615143

WHICH IS A CIP OF PRIOR APPLICATION NO. 08/613144

Enclosed are:

Application Elements

1. ☒ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having 54 pages and including the following:
 - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
 - b. ☒ Cross References to Related Applications (if applicable)
 - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development (if applicable)
 - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix (if applicable)
 - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
 - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
 - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings (if drawings filed)
 - h. ☒ Detailed Description
 - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
 - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
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Total Pages in this Submission

Application Elements (Continued)

3. ☒ Drawing(s) *(when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)*
- a. ☒ Formal Number of Sheets 7
- b. ☐ Informal Number of Sheets _____
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☐ Newly executed *(original or copy)* ☐ Unexecuted
- b. ☒ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) *(for continuation/divisional application only)*
- c. ☒ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☒ Incorporation By Reference *(usable if Box 4b is checked)*
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche *(Appendix)*
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission *(if applicable, all must be included)*
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy *(identical to computer copy)*
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

Accompanying Application Parts

8. ☒ Assignment Papers *(cover sheet & document(s))*
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement *(when there is an assignee)*
10. ☐ English Translation Document *(if applicable)*
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☒ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class ☒ Express Mail *(Specify Label No.):* EL625074080US

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.
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Total Pages in this Submission

Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)

15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)

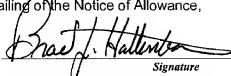
16. ☐ Additional Enclosures (please identify below):

Fee Calculation and Transmittal

CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	170	- 20 =	150	x \$18.00	\$2,700.00
Indep. Claims	9	- 3 =	6	x \$78.00	\$468.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$690.00
OTHER FEE (specify purpose)					\$0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$3,858.00

- ☒ A check in the amount of \$3,858.00 to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. 04-1415 as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☐ Charge the amount of as filing fee.
- ☒ Credit any overpayment.
- ☒ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
- ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).


Signature

Brad Hattenbach, Reg. No. 42,642
Customer No. 20686

Dated: August 4, 2000

cc: ACTV, Inc.

09633346-080400

Express Mail No. EL625074080US
Attorney Docket No. 4247.11

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re: Application of

Inventor: Craig Ullman, Jack D. Hidary, and Nova T. Spivack

Serial No.:

Filed: herewith

For: Enhanced Video Programming System and Method for Incorporating and Displaying
Retrieved Integrated Internet Information Systems



CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY EXPRESS MAIL

Box PATENT APPLICATION
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

The undersigned hereby certifies that the attached: **Patent Application Transmittal Letter (large entity); Declaration & Power of Attorney (signed); Recordation Form Cover Sheet for Assignment; Specification, Claims, and Abstract; seven sheets drawings; \$3858 check; return postcard; and this Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail**, all relating to the above application were deposited as "Express Mail", Mailing Label No. EL625074080US, with the United States Postal Service, addressed to Box Patent Application, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 4, 2000.



Mailer - Jane Lalis

Customer No. 20686

09633346-080400

SPECIFICATION

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN, that we, Craig Ullman, Jack Hidary, and Nova Spivack, citizens of the United States and residents of the State of New York, have invented certain new and useful improvements in:

**ENHANCED VIDEO PROGRAMMING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR
INCORPORATING AND DISPLAYING RETRIEVED INTEGRATED INTERNET
INFORMATION SEGMENTS**

of which the following is a specification.

**ENHANCED VIDEO PROGRAMMING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR
INCORPORATING AND DISPLAYING RETRIEVED INTEGRATED INTERNET
INFORMATION SEGMENTS**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 This application is a continuation of U.S. application Serial No. 09/472,385 filed
December 23, 1999, which is a continuation of U.S. application Serial No. 09/109945 filed
July 6, 1998, now U.S. Patent No. 6,018,768, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S.
application Serial No. 08/615,143 filed March 14, 1996, now U.S. Patent No. 5,778,181,
which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Serial No. 08/613,144 filed March 8, 1996,
abandoned, and is related to U.S. application Serial No. 08/622,474 filed March 25, 1996,
now U.S. Patent No. 5,774,664, which is herein incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 Today, the capabilities of computers to provide massive amounts of educational and
entertainment information has exploded with the Internet. The Internet has the power to
transform society through unprecedented levels of information flow between members.
Currently, on-line systems offer a variety of different services to users, including news feeds,
electronic databases (either searchable by the user directly on the on-line system, or
downloadable to the user's own computer), private message services, electronic newsletters,
real time games for play by several users at the same time, and job placement services, to
20 name a few. However, today, most on-line communications occur merely through text. This
currently stands in great contrast to the audio/visual presentation of the alternative electronic
medium, television. However, it is expected that as multi-media's incessant growth
continues, audio/visual programs will proliferate and text will become less and less dominant

in the on-line environment. Even though these programs will be introduced, the Internet, will remain essentially user unfriendly due to its very massiveness, organization, and randomness. Simply stated, there is no order or direction in the Internet. Specific pieces of information are many times hard to find, and harder yet, is the ability to put that piece of information into a meaningful context.

Television, on the other hand, has been criticized for being a passive medium - "chewing gum for the eyes," as Fred Allen once observed. Television has always been something you watched, not something you do. Many social critics believe that the passivity television depends on has seeped into our entire culture, turning a nation of citizens into a nation of viewers. While interactive television systems have increased the level of user interaction, and thus, provided greater learning and entertainment opportunities, vast information resources such as databases are inaccessible from such a medium.

What is needed is a means to close the gap between video programming and the information superhighway of the Internet. What is needed is a wider, richer experience integrating audio/visual and textual database elements into an organized unique interactive, educational, entertainment experience. Currently, the Internet is a repository of information on virtually any subject. However, what is needed is a mechanism for combining the user-friendly visual experience of television with the vast information resources of the Internet.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The system of the present invention combines broadcast television programming and/or video programming which appears on a VHS or Beta tape, CD-ROM, DVD or other medium, or video programming at a video server (hereinafter "video programming") with the massive Internet, creating a new and powerful educational and entertainment medium. The system allows consumers to receive more information in a more efficient manner than either television or the Internet alone. Consumers not only can see a news report on television, but they can also read pertinent information about the report, as well as explore related information about the story. The program becomes the introduction to a particular subject, rather than the entire subject itself. The act of viewing a program has now become a more engaging, enriching experience.

15 The system can also create a more intimate relationship between the viewer and the program. The user might be solving problems or performing virtual experiments on the Internet site that a teacher is discussing in an educational television program. Similarly, the consumer might be solving problems that the fictional characters in a television program must solve. In both cases, the consumer is an active participant in the process, rather than a passive observer.

20 Instead of an undirected and unfocused exploration of Internet sites, by synching specific Internet pages to the video signal, the system puts the Internet in context. The television program producers now can decide what additional information to offer their audience. This material can now be seen in the context of the television program.

An additional advantage is that consumers don't have to search through the literally hundreds of millions of pages on the Internet to find appropriate material. The material has

already been filtered by the program producers and delivered to the consumer automatically.

Another advantage of the system is that it changes the nature of advertising. Since additional information can be given to consumers automatically, advertising can now be more substantive, allowing customers to make more informed choices. Now, the act of purchasing a product seen on television can be streamlined -- the consumer can be given the choice of buying the product instantly using the two-way capabilities of the system.

In addition, users can take advantage of the two-way capabilities of the Internet to respond to polls, to send e-mail or to link to additional sites. For example, a viewer watching a television news program, through the system of the invention, can receive a stream of Web pages which provide additional, specific information relating to the news content -- whether background on the Presidential primaries or the latest change in interest rates.

The video programming and corresponding Internet pages can be viewed on personal computers equipped with a television card, but the open software-based approach enables anyone with a television set and JAVA enables PC to experience the system of the invention.

By marrying the appeal of video with the two-way data transfer capabilities of the Internet, the system creates a powerful new medium: Video producers and Internet site creators can enhance their content to extend their brand identity and differentiate their program offerings to the millions of people who are spending more time navigating through the resources of the World Wide Web rather than watching television; advertisers can speak more directly to consumers by directly sending Web pages to the consumer instead of only displaying Web addresses in their commercials; and consumers can gain a new level of interest and interactivity over a video-based medium. In addition to providing significant and immediate benefits to broadcasters and advertisers, the system will also present educational programmers with a way to more effectively use Internet resources in the classroom.

Recently, several media companies have joined to create a system for linking the Internet and television on the personal computer, called "Intercast." In this system, content will be provided simultaneously with the TV video signal. This system, however, requires that stripped down Web pages be sent in the vertical blanking interval (VBI) of the video signal, using up to three scan lines limiting effective bandwidth to approximately 28.8 kbps. This approach, however, requires specialized hardware to both insert the Web pages into the VBI and extract these codes at each PC since it takes up to three scan lines of the VBI. Thus, the complexity and cost of the PC is increased. Because the Web pages are transmitted with the video signal, the Intericast system is not a true "two-way" system, but merely a one-way "piggyback" system. In addition, the Intericast is an analog video product, and thus, cannot handle digital video data.

The system of the present invention, on the other hand, is a much more flexible, but less complex, system. The present invention supports either analog or digital television broadcasts without broadcasters or end-users having to alter their existing systems, thus enabling broadcasters to reach a wide audience within a short time.

In a first embodiment, the actual Web pages are not forced into the very limited bandwidth of the vertical blanking interval (VBI). Instead, merely eight fields of line 21 of the VBI are used to deliver the relevant Internet Web page addresses to the PC. These addresses are called "uniform resource locators" (URLs). The system then directs the particular Web browser to retrieve the identified Web pages from the Internet. Upon receipt of the particular Web page(s), the system syncs the Web page(s) to the video signal, and at the appropriate times, presents the Web pages on one portion of the computer screen with the television video signal, shown in a window on another portion of the screen, and thus, provides the synergistic Internet and television experience. One of the advantages of the

system of the present invention is that no specialized chip set need be produced and implemented into the standard PC. Thus, complexity is kept to a minimum.

In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, the VBI is not used to transmit the URLs to the user. In this alternative embodiment, member broadcasters enter the Internet through a member account, and will be provided with a graphical user interface for pre-scheduling Internet addresses, or URLs, for transmission to users at particular times of day. This interface could also be used to transmit real time live transmissions of URLs to users at the same time as a broadcast. The URLs are stored in a "Link File" for later transmission over the Internet to the user at the broadcasters entered time, which corresponds to the broadcast time of an associated program. The timing of URL's could be determined in advance or can be sent out live. This embodiment eliminates the need to place the URLs in the VBI, and also allows the broadcaster to store more than one Link File for transmission to users in different time zones, for example. Further, more than one broadcaster could access the same master schedule if desired, and add or delete certain URLs to personalize the program for their local audiences. Also, personalization can be taken to the single user, or small group of users, by having the system send a different stream of URLs to each user, depending on a unique user profile, for example. Thus, the personalization feature of the present invention allows each user to receive information uniquely relevant to their interests, demographics, history, etc. This embodiment makes the transmission of URLs to the user even less complex than the first embodiment disclosed herein.

Thus, it is an object of the present invention to provide order and direction to the Internet by using television signals to place, orient and control such information in a meaningful context.

It is an object of the present invention to create a more intimate relationship between

the viewer and the program by enriching the learning experience through the provision of more in-depth information.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagram of the system design, showing the receipt and decoding of video signals at the subscriber location using the method of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a diagram showing an alternative system embodiment to achieve the integration of the Internet information with the video content by decoding the uniform resource locators at a server site and then transmitting the URLs to the subscriber stations via the Internet.

Figure 3 is a flow diagram of the basic software design of the present invention.

Figure 4 is a diagram showing another preferred system embodiment to achieve the direct transmission of URLs over the Internet to the user at a broadcaster's entered time without encoding the URLs into the VBI.

Figure 5 is a diagram of another preferred embodiment including a digital cable box.

Figure 6 is a diagram of another preferred embodiment including a digital T.V.

Figure 8 is a sample display provided to a student of a lesson.

Figure 9 is a diagram of the distributed Com Server embodiment.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The system of the present invention combines the rich visual capabilities of video with the vast resources of the Internet. As shown in Figure 1, a preferred embodiment of the invention is a computer based system for receiving a video program along with embedded uniform resource locators (URLs)--which direct the user's computer to address locations, or Web sites, on the Internet to retrieve related Web pages. These Web pages correspond

to the video presentation. The particular video programming can be delivered in analog, digital or digitally compressed formats (e.g., MPEG2) via any transmission means, including satellite, cable, wire, television broadcast or sent via the Web.

5 The video programming is preferably created at a centralized location, i.e., content creation 4 as shown in Figure 1, for distribution to subscribers in their homes, for example. Program creation is accomplished according to any conventional means known in the art. After a video program is created, uniform resource locators are embedded, in one preferred embodiment, into the vertical blank interval of the video programming by the URL encoder 8, shown in Figure 1. In this embodiment, the URLs are encoded onto eight fields of line 21 of the VBI. Line 21 is the line associated with close captioning, among other things. However, the URLs could also be embedded in other fields of the VBI, in the horizontal portion of the video, as part of the audio channel, in any subcarrier to the video, or if digital, in one of the data fields.

10 Although Figure 1 shows the video with URLs over the same transmission line, the URLs can be sent down independently of the video program on a data channel. In this embodiment, the URLs can be forwarded to the remote sites either prior to initiation or during the program. Preferably, the URLs have associated time stamps which indicate to the subscriber stations when, during the video program, to display the particular Web pages addressed by the URLs. Alternatively, the user can select when to call the particular Web pages for display with the video program.

20 The particular information in line 21 is not part of the visual part of the program, and thus, is not perceptible to the human eye, thereby making it ideal to send data information to the users. While the bandwidth capacity of line 21 is limited, because the system of the present invention transmits only the uniform resource locators (URLs), and not full Web

pages, there is more than enough capacity. Furthermore, no additional hardware is necessary at the PC 16 to implement the elements of the present invention. Thus, the present invention has the additional advantages of being very efficient and takes advantage of conventional hardware.

5 Once the video program is created, it can be transmitted to user sites over any transmission means, including broadcast, cable, satellite, or Internet, and may reside on video servers. Furthermore, the video program, with or without embedded URLs, can be encoded on a VHS or Beta tape, DVD or other medium.

10 Preferably, each receiver station comprises any Intel x86 machine (preferably a 486 processor, pentium processor, etc.), an Apple Computer, UNIX or any other type of standard computer workstation. The local PC 16 is preferably connected to either a cable and/or broadcast television connection or to a local VCR or other video source. At each subscriber site, the local personal computer 16 preferably receives the cable transmission by cable connection on the back of the personal computer 16. The video/audio program can then be
15 processed for display on the computer screen using any conventional PC card capable of displaying NTSC signals on a computer monitor, such as a WinTV card. In addition to the cable connection, however, in the present invention there is also an Internet 20 connection created concurrently with the cable connection.

20 The Internet 20 connection can be via high-speed line, RF, conventional modem or by way of two-way cable carrying the video programming. The local PC 16 has Internet access via any of the current ASCII software mechanisms. In a preferred embodiment, at each subscriber home, an associated local URL decoder 12 receives the cable video television program, as shown in Figure 1. The local URL decoder 12 extracts the URLs, preferably embedded in the vertical blanking interval, with the use of any conventional VBI decoder

device. The URL decoder 12 may be either a stand-alone unit or a card which is implemented into the personal computer 16.

In another preferred embodiment shown in Figure 2, the uniform resource locators (URLs) are encoded into the video in the same manner as described above. Again, the URLs are preferably encoded onto eight fields of line 21 of the VBI, but may also be sent independently of the video. In this embodiment, the URL decoder 24 is located at the server site, as opposed to the subscriber location. When the decoder 24 receives the video program signal, it strips out the URL codes on line 21 of the VBI and delivers these codes independently to an Internet server 28. The URL code is then subsequently delivered over the Internet 20 to the user PC 16. Simultaneously, the video is broadcast over conventional broadcast or cable transmission means 36 to the user's personal computer 16.

Another preferred embodiment of the system, shown in Figure 4, does not depend on, or even use, the VBI. In this preferred embodiment, the system will run an online service over the Internet 20. This service will be in the form of an Internet Web site 62 that provides a user-interface to a database 78 and to one or more associated data servers 90. The service will provide member-accounts to TV broadcasters 66 who sign up to use the system of the invention in conjunction with their broadcasts. Each member broadcaster will enter the service at their computer 70 through Web browser software 74 using their member account by entering various identification and password information. Once within their account, the member will be provided with a graphical user interface for pre-scheduling URLs for transmission to users 118 over a direct Internet connection 94 at particular times of day. The same user interface, or a variation on it, can be used by broadcasters for live transmission 82 of URLs to users at the same time as a broadcast 86.

For example, one example of this interface might be a scheduling calendar (daily,

weekly, monthly, yearly) in which the broadcaster 66 may allocate time periods which coincide with their broadcasts 86, and during which they will send out URLs to their users to link to Web pages. For each time period (for example, a particular hour long period during the day) determined by the broadcaster 66 to be a broadcast period (a period during which they want to transmit URLs that correspond to a television show being broadcast from their TV broadcast facility 110 to the external TV 114 of the user 118 at that time), the broadcaster 66 may then enter a series of URLs into an associated file ("Link File") for transmission over the Internet 20 at that time. This Link File might have a user interface such as a spreadsheet, table, or list, or it could be simply a tab-delimited or paragraph-delimited text-file. As an example, each of the records in the Link File consists of a data structure which could contain information such as:

(<timecode>,<URL>,<label or title>,<additional information>,<additional information>,...)

The above data structure is just one example. The records in the Link File preferably specify the time, Internet address (i.e. URL), label (such as an associated name), and some optional additional information, for each Web page the broadcaster 66 desires to launch during a show.

When a broadcaster 66 modifies their calendar and/or the Link File associated with any given time period(s) in their calendar, this information is saved into the database 78 that is attached to the site 62. Each broadcaster 66 may maintain multiple calendars in the database 78 if they broadcast in different time zones, for example.

The database 78 provides the Link File records for upcoming time periods to a server 90, which may be one server or a distributed network of server programs on multiple computers across the network, to be utilized for scaling to large national or global audiences.

The server 90 provides the Link File records, including the URLs, to the user's personal computer 16, which is connected via a network. Examples of possible networks include the public Internet 94, a direct private network, or even a wireless network.

One feature of the above embodiment is that one or more broadcasters 66 may utilize the same schedule in the database 78 for their own broadcasts 86 or during the same broadcast. For example, a network broadcaster may develop a master schedule and various affiliate broadcasters may subscribe to that schedule or copy it (in the database) and add or delete specific URLs in the schedule for their local audiences or unique programming. This scheme enables affiliates to insert URLs for local advertisers or local subjects into a sequence of more general URLs provided by their network broadcaster 66. In other words, the affiliate can add links that ride on the network feed and then redistribute it to their local audiences.

The above embodiment can also enable personalization in the form of unique series of URLs specific to each user's unique profile, which is directly sent over the Internet 20 to each user's specific client software 106. This can be achieved from the broadcaster 66 to each individual user 118, or to particular collections of users. To accomplish personalization, the service may send a different stream of URLs to each user's client software program 106. The stream of URLs sent would depend on a user profile stored in the database 78 or the client software program 106, a user profile which is built on demand or over time for each user 118 based on criteria such as the location of the user, choices the user makes while using a client software program 106, or choices the broadcaster 66 makes during a broadcast 86, or automatic choices made by an algorithm (such as a filter) residing on the service 62. Personalization enables each user to receive URLs which are uniquely relevant to their interests, demographics, history, or behavior in the system.

System Operation

Once the URLs have reached the personal computer 16, system operation is similar for all of the embodiments diagramed in Figures 1, 2, and 4.

In a preferred embodiment, a JAVA enabled browser 98 as well as specialized software 106 for performing part of the method of the present invention are installed on the computer 16. The JAVA enabled browser 98 allows the computer 16 to retrieve the Web pages 102 and is preferred software, since it is platform independent, and thus, enables efficient and flexible transfer of programs, images, etc., over the Internet 20. The specialized interface software 106 (hereinafter, "client software"), attached as Appendix A, acts as an interface between the video programming and the Internet functions of the present invention. The client software 106 retrieves URLs from the video program (embodiment of Figure 1) or directly from the Internet connection (embodiments of Figures 2 and 4), interprets these URLs and directs the JAVA enabled browser 98 to retrieve the particular relevant Web pages 102, and synchronizes the retrieved Web pages to the video content for display on the user's computer 16, as shown in Figures 3 and 4 and explained in more detail below.

In a preferred method, the URLs are encoded and embedded into the video signal by inserting them into the vertical blanking interval (VBI), as mentioned above.

In another preferred embodiment, the URLs are entered by member TV broadcasters 66 along with specified times for transmitting the URLs to the user. At the appropriate times, the URLs are sent directly over the Internet to the user's PC 16 via the client software 106 over a direct point-to-point or multicasting connection.

One method of the present invention has the capability to detect identical URLs sent directly after one another which causes the browser not to fetch URLs in these particular cases. As shown in Figure 3, once the URL code is received at the computer, the client

software 106 first interprets the URL and determines in step 42 whether the particular URL has been received previously. If it has already been received, the next received URL is interpreted for determination of prior receipt. If the particular URL has not been detected before, the software checks for misspelling in step 46 and any other errors, and if errors exist, corrects these particular errors. Once again, it is determined whether the URL has been previously detected. If it has, the next URL is accessed in step 38. If the URL has not been detected, the specific URL is added to the URL list in step 54. The specific URL is then sent to the Web browser, preferably a JAVA enabled browser 98. Upon receipt of the URL, the browser 98, in step 58, will access the Web site address 122 (Figure 4) indicated by the URL and retrieve the cited Web page(s) 102 via the Internet.

Viewers can view the integrated presentation in the following manner. As mentioned above, the video signal is processed and displayed on a video window on the PC screen using a WinTV card, for example. The corresponding audio is forwarded to the audio card and sent to the PC speakers.

The actual retrieved Web pages 102, referenced by the URL, are optionally time stamped to be displayed on the computer screen when predetermined related video content is displayed in the video window, thus, enlightening and enhancing the video presentation by providing in-depth information related to the video content thereto. Another section on the screen is also preferably used to represent an operational control panel. This control panel provides a list of the URLs that have been broadcast and correspondingly received by the computer 16. This control panel is updated to add a URL code each time a new URL code is received by the PC 16. This list gives the subscriber the flexibility to go back and retrieve particularly informative or interesting Web pages that have already been displayed earlier in the program, or alternatively, to print them out for future reference. Furthermore, the list

could include URLs referring to Web pages not displayed with the broadcast program, but that provide further information on a certain topic of interest to the viewer.

The present invention can best be understood with reference to an example. A viewer can begin watching a musical video featuring a new band, for example. As the video is received by the PC 16, URLs are either being received with the video signal or are being received directly via the Internet 20 or another data channel, and are being interpreted by the client software 106. Upon direction and command, the JAVA enabled browser 98 retrieves particular Web pages 102 from Internet 20 Web sites identified in the URLs. These Web pages 102 will then be displayed on the video screen at particular times. Thus, for example, while the viewer is watching the music video, biographical information on the band can also be displayed adjacently to the video window. Web pages 102 could also include an upcoming concert schedule, or even audio clips of the band's music may be downloaded from the Internet 20. As another example, a user could be watching a program relating to financial news. While the narrator is shown discussing high tech stocks, Web pages corresponding to detailed financial performance information on high tech stocks, environment and characteristics can be displayed with the video on the computer screen. If the personalization features are included, Web pages associated with a particular user's stock can be fetched and displayed on the computer screen with the video program. When the program narrator switches to a discussion on the weekly performance of the Dow Jones, Web pages presenting related financial performance information can be simultaneously displayed. Thus, it is evident that the present invention profoundly enriches the viewing and learning experience.

It is understood that there can exist alternative embodiments for use with the present invention. For example, the user can view the interactive program using a television set 114 or other display monitor in conjunction with the display screen of the personal computer 16.

In this embodiment, the relevant Web pages are shown on the personal computer 16 while the video program is displayed on the television monitor 114. In this alternative embodiment, a cable set top box receives the television program from the multichannel cable. The personal computer 16 also receives the video program from the multi-channel cable and extracts the URLs, embedded in the vertical blanking interval of the video signal or directly transmitted 94 over the Internet 20. The client software 106 extracts the URLs and retrieves the particular Web pages as described above. The Web pages are then synchronized with the particular video frames and presented to the user. It is understood that a hyperlink may exist on the Web site that will allow the user to automatically load the client software and call up the specific television channel referenced in the Web site. For example, someone browsing the Internet 20 may come upon a major television network's Web site. They scroll to an interesting story then click on an hyperlink to turn on the software which tunes the TV window to the network to enhance the information residing at the Web site.

Furthermore, instead of receiving the video program from a transmission means, the video program can be addressed directly from the user site if the video program, with or without embedded URLs, is stored on a VHS, Beta, DVD or other medium. In this embodiment, the user PC 16 and/or television 114 are connected to a VCR, DVD player or other appropriate device.

Figures 5 and 6 show two alternative embodiments for use with the present invention. For example, the user can view the interactive program using a television set 18 or other display monitor in conjunction with a digital cable box 140, as shown in Figure 5. In this embodiment, the digital cable box 140 performs the functions of the personal computer 16 shown in Figures 1, 2 and 4. In the embodiment shown in Figure 5, the client software is stored in memory in the digital cable box 140. In the preferred embodiment, the digital cable

box 140 includes two tuners, thus allowing both the Web Page and the Video program to be simultaneously viewed on the same screen. If Video and Webstream, however, are carried on one channel, then only one timer is necessary.

The client software retrieves URLs from the received video program, directly from the Internet connection 20 or via a separate data channel, interprets these URLs and directs the Web enabled browser to retrieve the particular relevant Web pages, and synchronizes the retrieved Web pages to the video content for display on the television 18, as shown in Figure 5. In this embodiment, the relevant Web pages are shown in one frame of the television 18 while the video program is displayed in another frame.

In this alternative embodiment, the digital cable set top box 140 receives the television program from the multichannel cable. The URLs can be encoded into the digital program channel using MPEG 1, MPEG2, MPEG4, MPEG7 or any other compression video scheme. Alternatively, the URLs can be transmitted to the digital cable boxes 140 from an Internet server 148. The digital cable box 140 decodes the URLs from the digital video signal or directly transmitted over the Internet 20. The client software decodes the URLs and retrieves the particular Web pages as described above. The Web pages are then preferably synchronized with the particular video frames and presented to the user.

As with all the embodiments described above, instead of receiving the video program from a transmission means, the video program can be addressed directly from a local video source 144 if the video program, with or without embedded URLs, is stored on a VHS, Beta, DVD or other medium. In this embodiment, the digital cable box 140 is connected to a VCR, DVD player or other appropriate device.

Figure 6 discloses an embodiment where a digital TV 152 is the remote reception unit. In this embodiment, the digital TV 152 performs the functions of the personal computer,

shown in Figures 1, 2 and 4, and the digital cable box 140 shown in Figure 5. In the embodiment shown in Figure 6, a processor means and memory are incorporated into the digital TV 152. Further, the client software and Web browser software are implemented into memory in the digital TV 152. All of the functions described above with reference to the other embodiments are performed in a similar manner by the digital TV 152 embodiment.

Although the digital cable box/TV 140, 18 and digital TV 152, shown in Figures 5 and 6, are incorporated into the embodiment of Figure 1, in substitution for the PC 16, they also could be substituted for the PC 16 shown in Figures 2 and 4.

The user can view the video and web content on one screen (in two windows), or with the video on one display screen and the Web content on a separate display monitor. Alternatively, the user can access the video or web content separately. Thus, the user can branch from video to web content and vice versa.

The present invention is well-suited to the education environment. In this embodiment, students and teachers access one or more Web servers. The software components include instructor and student user software, authoring software and database assessment software. In one such embodiment, an instructor uses content creation software on a personal computer to easily integrate into their curriculum current information published on the Web, through an easy to use interface 156 such as that shown in Figure 7. The instructor creates a playlist (i.e. linkfile) 160; the playlist 160 comprising a listing of Web pages, text notes and questions. The Web sites and questions are set forth in a predetermined order and can be assigned times. Preferably, the URLs identifying the Web site and time stamps are sent automatically to the desktop of each student in the virtual community, either during playback of a pre-recorded program or during a live event.

At each of the student workstations, the program is directed by the playlist 160. In

other words, the playlist 160 provides the structure for the program. At predetermined times as dictated by the playlist 160, the browser will go fetch and display a Web page in a frame on the computer screen. Because program events can be set up in this manner at predetermined times, the entire program and playlist can be prerecorded and stored in a Web database for later access by students.

A significant advantage of the present invention for educational applications is that the students and the instructor can be located anywhere, as long as they are all connected to the Web. Because a server is essentially controlling the program, the instructor output comes from the server and the student workstations get automatically updated by the Web server.

This educational embodiment integrates Web content and other media with collaborative groupware functionality to create an interactive environment for students and teachers. In this embodiment, the student can receive a traditional video lesson through a frame in his or her Web browser, or from a television. Simultaneously, the present invention provides separate frames, an example of which is shown in Figure 8, in the browser displaying: (1) Web pages 176 automatically delivered to each student's desktop with information or exercises that complement the video presentation; (2) a chat dialogue frame 168 for conversing with the instructor and/or other students online; and (3), an interactive playlist 164 of Web pages and questions comprising the lesson.

In the student interface of Figure 8, each student can perform a virtual experiment during a physics lesson to learn about gravity, for example. Further, the students are conversing with one another and the instructor in the chat dialogue frame 168. They may also send Web pages to one another and provide answers to questions from the teacher via the chat dialogue frame 168 of the student interface 176. With the chat feature, students may break into subgroups for collaborative learning. Whenever a student in the group sends a message,

the message is sent to the Internet server 20 and every other student in the subgroup receives and views the message in their Chat dialogue frame 168.

The instructor, however, may retain control over the chat feature. For example, the instructor can terminate the chat feature or web pushing to terminate unruly on-line conversations or the sending of Web pages by students.

Unlike conventional distance learning systems, the present invention is more powerful by allowing the instructor to freely and conveniently exercise almost any time of testing strategy. The instructor can test students using a combination of the Chat dialogue feature and Web pages. For example, multiple choice questions and short answer questions can appear in the Chat window 168. Essay questions, requiring longer answers, become Web pages. As mentioned above, students can perform virtual experiments on-line. Once the instructor's personal computer receives student answers, student scoring can be presented to the instructor in any format including tables, charts, diagrams, bar graphs, etc.. The instructor, thus, can analyze the results and has the capability of providing real-time feedback to the students.

Students can also receive individualized feedback via branched interactive audio, video and/or graphics responses. For example, the workstation may branch to a particular audio response, preferably prerecorded in the instructor's own voice, based on the student response to a multiple choice question. In this embodiment, a plurality of potential audio responses are made available at the student's workstation according to any one of the methodologies set forth in U.S. Patent No. 5,537,141, entitled DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM, herein incorporated by reference. Alternatively, personalized video, audio and graphics segments can be delivered and displayed to the student based on a student answer or personal profile in the manner set forth in U.S. Patent No. 5,724,091, entitled

COMPRESSED DIGITAL DATA INTERACTIVE PROGRAM SYSTEM, herein incorporated by reference.

Responses to student answers can be more substantive based on the memory feature of the present invention. The memory feature is an algorithm that selects an interactive response to the user based not only on the student's current answer selection, but also his or her previous responses, as discussed in the aforementioned applications. The algorithm, preferably stored in memory at each student's workstation and under processor control, merely selects an output interactive response based on student responses. As another example, if a student gets three answers in sequence right, he or she receives a more difficult question. If, however, the student misses one or more of the three questions, he or she receives an easier question.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a system is described capable of handling the education requirements of several schools in an efficiently designed network. The system shown in Figure 9 solves the problems inherent in attempting to service large numbers of users, the most obvious obstacles being the issues of load and performance. In this embodiment shown in Figure 9, communications servers 180 distribute and route messages across a LAN, WAN and the Internet. Referring to Figure 9, in the center of the diagram is the Group Database server. Surrounding the database server are several Com Servers 180, each serving an area 192. Surrounding each Com Server 180 are squares representing user stations 188. The Communication Servers 180 are organized in node relationships with one another.

Each node is responsible for serving an Area 192. An Area 192 is defined as a Virtual location serviced by a single Communications Server 180 (or "Com Server"). An Area 192 may be a single school, an office, or may consist of several actual physical locations. The

defining characteristic of an Area 192 is that messages sent from one member of an Area 192 to another need not be routed outside of the servicing Com Server 180.

An Area member is analogous to the frequently used term "user." For example, a "user" may be a student in the educational embodiment described above with reference to Figures 7 and 8.

The Distributed Communication System of Figure 9 shall permit the dynamic addition of Communication Servers 180 within a group with little or no administrative tasks as well as the addition of groups within an overall communications network. A Communication Server group consists of several defined Virtual Areas 192 (preferably, consisting of no more the 250 members each), each area 192 serviced by a single Com Server 180. This system shall allow members of one Area 192, or group to easily communicate with members of another Area 192 or group without any configuration changes.

Generally, service of very large numbers of users has required large expensive servers and networks. As the user base increases, performance suffers and hardware must be upgraded to service the demand.

The Distributed Communication System of the present invention allows the same, relatively inexpensive machines to serve an ever-increasing user base. The technique by which this will be accomplished will be through the routing of messages from one server to another when necessary.

The method essentially follows the same core pattern as IP routing and DNS lookups. If a message is for a member not belonging to the current Area 192 or group, the message shall be routed through the Distributed Communication System until its destination, or someone who knows the destination and can deliver the message, is found.

The destination will be cached so subsequent messages for that member or group may

be more efficiently delivered.

Referring again to Figure 9, if a message is posted by member "A" and is intended only for the members of group 1 the message shall never leave Area 1 Com Server. However, if the message is intended for members of Area 1 and the members of Area 2, the Area 1 Com server forwards the message to the group database server 184. The message shall be broadcast to the members of Area 1 and tagged in the database 184 as belonging to Area 2. The message is then routed to Area 2 and broadcast to Area 2 members. With this technique any member can potentially send a message to any other member. If the Area Com server 180 does not recognize the destination, the message is forwarded up the line. Each Com server 180 does not need to know about any other server 180. Messages are routed until they delivered. If undeliverable, the original sender is notified.

New Areas 192 can be added on the fly. When a new Com server 188 is added to the network, it registers itself with the database application. Henceforth, any message destined for the new Area 192 can be routed properly without altering the other Area Servers 180.

This method and system works for global messages or for user to user messages. Furthermore, new Groups may also be dynamically added. Once added, each new Group Database Server 184 registers itself with the existing database servers 184. This distribution of load permits nearly unlimited expansion with existing software and hardware. Each server manages a finite number of members, cumulatively serving a growing community.

Users need not be informed as to the particular Com Server 180 they should connect to. Members are directed to a single URL. The selection of the server for user connection is determined by load balancing software. In this manner, the network may appear to be a global network of Servers or simply a local classroom.

The unique aspects of this architecture, using database servers as routing gateways,

using techniques resembling IP routing and DNS lookup, enables this system to serve with minimum administration and configuration and with lower end, cost-effective hardware.

Using the foregoing embodiments, methods and processes, the system of the present invention creates a synergistic experience combining the vast resources of the Internet with the presentation capabilities of television.

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CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A system for providing a programming signal containing a program and at least one address identifying online content relating to the program from an online information source, the system comprising:

a first transmitter, wherein the transmitter transmits the program to a user site; and

a second transmitter, wherein the second transmitter transmits the address to the user site,

wherein, at some time after receipt of the address at the user site, the online content is automatically retrieved and presented to a user at the user site in conjunction with the program.

2. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the first transmitter and the second transmitter are co-located in the same facility.

3. A system as described in claim 2, wherein the first transmitter and the second transmitter are co-located at a Web hosting site.

4. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the first transmitter and the second transmitter are located in separate locations.

5. A system as described in claim 4, wherein the second transmitter is located at a Web hosting site.

6. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address is transmitted during the transmission of the program.

7. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address is transmitted prior to the transmission of the program.

8. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address is transmitted at a predetermined time during the transmission of the program.

9. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the second transmitter transmits a plurality of addresses.

10. A system as described in claim 9, wherein each of the plurality of addresses is transmitted at certain predetermined times during the program.

11. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the first transmitter is located at one of the sites selected from the group consisting of: a cable head-end, a program operations center, a satellite operations center, an Internet site, an intranet site, a private network site, and a public network site.

12. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the second transmitter is located at one of the sites selected from the group consisting of: a cable head-end, a program operations center, a satellite operations center, an Internet site, an intranet site, a private network site, and a public network site.

13. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the programming signal is transmitted via at least one transmission medium selected from the group consisting of: the Internet, an intranet, terrestrial broadcast, cable, satellite broadcast, fiber optics, a telephone circuit, a wireless connection, a private network, and a public network.

5 14. A system as described in claim 1, further comprising a recording medium, wherein the program is a previously recorded program stored on the recording medium, and the first transmitter receives the program from the recording medium.

10 15. A system as described in claim 14, wherein the recording medium is at least one selected from the group consisting of: VHS tape, compact disc, digital versatile disc, magnetic tape, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

16. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is transmitted as a live event.

15 17. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program comprises at least one form selected from the group consisting of: audio, video, data, graphics, animation, text, video stills, slow frame video, and multimedia.

18. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address is an Internet URL, the URL identifying the online information source which is an Internet site.

19. A system as described in claim 1, further comprising a memory device for storing the address prior to transmission by the second transmitter.

20. A system as described in claim 19, wherein the memory device is at least one selected from the group consisting of: compact disc, digital versatile disc, magnetic tape, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a server, a magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

21. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online information source is an Internet service provider.

22. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online information source comprises one selected from the group consisting of: an intranet, the Internet, a public network, and a private network.

23. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content comprises content in a form selected from the group consisting of: text, graphics, video, data, audio, animation, video stills, slow frame video, and multimedia.

24. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a sports program.

25. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is an advertisement.

26. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content is an

advertisement.

27. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a motion picture program.

28. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a game show program.

29. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a video program.

30. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a live program.

31. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is an audio program.

32. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a music video program.

33. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is a news program.

34. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the programming signal is in digital format.

35. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the programming signal is in analog format.

36. A system as described in claim 19, wherein multiple addresses are stored in a link file in a memory device.

37. A system as described in claim 36, wherein the link file is transmitted to the user by the second transmitter.

5 38. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address is selected based on a profile of a collection of users.

39. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content relates to a sitcom program.

40. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content relates to an interactive game show program.

41. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content is stored in one selected from the group consisting of: magnetic tape, compact disc, digital versatile disc, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

15 42. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content relates to a polling question.

43. A system as described in claim 32, wherein the online content contains

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additional information related to the music video program selected from the group consisting of biographical information on an artist, concert schedule, and information on buying goods related to the artist.

44. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content contains a query
5 for the user to respond to a poll.

45. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the online content is selected based,
at least in part, on a user profile.

46. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the program is selected based, at
least in part, on a user profile.

47. A system as described in claim 46, wherein the user profile is stored in a
storage device at one of the locations selected from the group consisting of: a user station, a
personal computer, a cable head-end, a cable box, a satellite receiver, an intranet site, an
Internet site, and a satellite operations center.

48. A system as described in claim 1, wherein the address relates to a polling
15 question.

49. A system as described in claim 1, further comprising a data management
storage device, wherein information about the user is stored in the data management device.

50. A system as described in claim 49, wherein an analysis is performed on the user information.

51. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the user information contains user clicks made by the user on a user interface while using an online service provider.

5 52. A system as described in claim 49, wherein information about a plurality of users is stored in the data management storage device.

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10 53. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the user information contains information selected from the group consisting of: the geographic location of the user, clicks made by the user on a user interface while using an on line service provider, user viewing habits, and demographics of the user.

54. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the program is selected, at least in part, based on the user information.

55. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the data management storage device is located at a location selected from the group consisting of: a user station, a personal computer, a cable head-end, a cable box, a satellite receiver, an intranet site, a public network, 15 a private network, and an Internet site.

56. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the program contains a predetermined advertisement and wherein selection of the predetermined advertisement is

based, at least in part, on the user information.

57. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the online content is based, at least in part, on the user information.

58. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the address is selected, at least in part, based on the user information.

59. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the online content contains an advertisement and wherein the advertisement is selected, at least in part, based on the user information.

60. A system as described in claim 49, wherein the programming signal contains a graphics segment and wherein the graphics segment is selected, at least in part, based on the user information.

61. A method for providing a programming signal containing a program and at least one address identifying online content relating to the program from an online information source, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting the program to a user site; and

providing the address to the user site,

wherein, at some time after receipt of the address at the user site, the online content is automatically retrieved and presented to a user at the user site in conjunction with the program.

62. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the transmitting step and the providing step originate from the same location.

63. A method as described in claim 62, wherein the transmitting step and the providing step occur at a Web hosting site.

5 64. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the transmitting step and the providing step originate from different locations.

65. A method as described in claim 64, wherein the providing step occurs at a Web hosting site.

66. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address providing step occurs during the program transmitting step.

67. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address providing step occurs prior to the program transmitting step.

68. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address providing step occurs at a predetermined time during the program transmitting step.

15 69. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address providing step further comprises the step of providing a plurality of addresses.

70. A method as described in claim 69, wherein each of the plurality of addresses are transmitted at certain predetermined times during the program.

71. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program transmitting step occurs at one of the sites selected from the group consisting of: a cable head-end, a program operations center, a satellite operations center, an Internet site, an intranet site, a private network site, and a public network site.

72. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address providing step occurs at one of the sites selected from the group consisting of: a cable head-end, a program operations center, a satellite operations center, an Internet site, an intranet site, a private network site, and a public network site.

73. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the transmitting step is performed via at least one transmission medium selected from the group consisting of: the Internet, an intranet, terrestrial broadcast, cable, satellite broadcast, fiber optics, a telephone circuit, a wireless connection, a private network, and a public network.

74. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a previously recorded program and further comprising the step of storing the program on a recording medium.

75. A method as described in claim 74, wherein the recording medium is at least one selected from the group consisting of: VHS tape, compact disc, digital versatile disc,

magnetic tape, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

76. A method as described in claim m 61, wherein the program is transmitted as a live event.

5 77. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program comprises at least one form selected from the group consisting of: audio, video, data, graphics, animation, text, video stills, slow frame video, and multimedia.

78. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address is an Internet URL, the URL identifying the online information source which is an Internet site.

10 79. A method as described in claim 61, further comprising the step of storing the address in a memory device prior to providing the address.

80. A method as described in claim 79, wherein the memory device is at least one selected from the group consisting of: compact disc, digital versatile disc, magnetic tape, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a server, a
15 magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

81. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online information source is an Internet service provider.

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82. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online information source comprises one selected from the group consisting of: an intranet, the Internet, a public network, and a private network.

83. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content comprises content in a form selected from the group consisting of: text, graphics, video, data, audio, animation, video stills, slow frame video, and multimedia.

84. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a sports program.

85. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is an advertisement.

86. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content is an advertisement.

87. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a motion picture program.

88. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a game show program.

89. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a video program.

90. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a live program.

91. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is an audio program.

92. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a music video program.

93. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is a news program.

5 94. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the programming signal is in digital format.

95. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the programming signal is in analog format.

10 96. A method as described in claim 79, further comprising the step of storing multiple addresses in a link file in the memory device, wherein the storing step occurs prior to the providing step.

97. A method as described in claim 96, wherein the link file is provided to the user site.

15 98. A method as described in claim 61, further comprising the step of selecting the address based on a user profile.

99. A method as described in claim 61, further comprising the step of selecting the

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address based on the profile of a collection of users.

100. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content relates to a sitcom program.

101. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content relates to an interactive game show program.

102. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content is stored in a storage device selected from the group consisting of: magnetic tape, compact disc, digital versatile disc, computer hard drive, random access memory, read only memory, CD ROM, a magnetic data storage medium, and an optical data storage medium.

103. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content relates to a polling question.

104. A method as described in claim 92, wherein the online content contains additional information related to the music video program selected from the group consisting of biographical information on an artist, concert schedule, and information on buying goods related to the artist.

105. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content contains a query for the user to respond to a poll.

106. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the online content is selected based, at least in part, on a user profile.

107. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the program is selected based, at least in part, on a user profile.

108. The method of claim 107, wherein the user profile is stored in a storage device at one of the locations selected from the group consisting of: a user station, a personal computer, a cable head-end, a cable box, a satellite receiver, an intranet site, an Internet site, and a satellite operations center.

109. A method as described in claim 61, wherein the address relates to a polling question.

110. An apparatus for encoding at least one address into a programming signal wherein the address identifies an Internet information segment at an Internet site, the segment related to a program provided in the programming signal, the apparatus comprising;

- an input for receiving a programming signal;
- an encoder for embedding the address into the programming signal, the address identifying the Internet site containing the Internet information segment; and
- an output port for outputting a programming signal which includes the embedded address,

wherein the encoder inserts the address into the programming signal such that Internet information is automatically pushed to a user system at some time after reception and

extraction of the address from the programming signal by the user system.

111. A method, for embedding an address into a programming signal, wherein the address identifies an Internet source of an online information segment which is associated with the programming signal, the method comprising:

- generating the programming signal;
 - obtaining at least one address identifying the Internet source of the online information segment associated with the programming signal;
 - determining when the content in the programming signal is to be presented to a user relative to a fixed reference frame; and
 - embedding the address into a location within the programming signal based upon the determination of when the content is to be presented,
- whereby the online information segment is automatically pushed to the user upon the user receiving the programming signal and extracting the address from the programming signal.

112. A system for designating, in a database accessible via the Internet, a link file identifying an online information segment obtained from an online information source identified by an address which is associated with a programming signal, comprising:

- a browser for establishing a communications connection with a network database;
- a means for entering the address into the link file provided in the network database;
- a means for designating in the link file the programming signal to which the address relates; and
- a user interface for interacting with the network database.

113. The system of claim 112, wherein the system further comprises:

an Internet Web hosting site further comprising:

a network database;

a means for accessing the network database; and

a means for saving the link file in the network database.

114 The system of claim 113, wherein the means for saving the link file further comprises a means for saving user clicks on a user interface in a database.

115. A system for transmitting video programming and at least one address useable for retrieving from at least one server on a network on-line information segments having content related to the video programming, comprising:

a broadcast system for sending to a viewer a signal carrying video programming for viewing by the viewer; and

an address server on the network for sending in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming the at least one address over the network to the viewer,

wherein the on-line information segments retrieved over the network from the at least one server using the at least one address are viewable by the viewer in a predetermined timing relationship with the viewing of the video programming.

116. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the address server sends each one of the at least one address with an associated time indicia for controlling when each one of the at least one address are to be used to retrieve respective ones of the on-line information

segments so as to be viewable by the viewer in respective predetermined timing relationship with the viewing of the video programming.

117. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the network comprises the Internet; the at least one server comprises at least one Internet web site; the at least one address comprises at least one uniform resource locator; and the on-line information segments
5 comprise at least one web page retrievable from the at least one Internet web site using the at least one uniform resource locator.

118. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the video programming comprises educational subject matter.

119. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the video programming
10 comprises entertainment subject matter.

120. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the video programming comprises advertising subject matter.

121. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the online information segments
15 include a request for viewer response and wherein the network has a two-way capability enabling the viewer to enter information in response to the request included in the on-line information segments.

122. A system as described in claim 117, wherein the network is the Internet, and

the at least one web page includes a request for viewer response and enables the viewer to enter information in response to the request included in the at least one web page.

123. A system as described in claim 121, wherein the request for viewer response is related to advertising subject matter of the video programming.

5 124. A system as described in claim 121, wherein the request for viewer response comprises an offer to sell a product or service, and the viewer is enabled to enter response information making a purchase of the product or the service.

125. A system as described in claim 115 1, further comprising a computer on the network for creating at least certain ones of the on-line information segments retrievable from respective ones of the at least one server and storing the created on-line information segments at the respective ones of the at least one server, wherein at least one address for retrieving the created on-line information segments is provided to the address server for sending to the viewer in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming.

126. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the broadcast system is a
15 television transmission system, and the signal is a television signal.

127. A system as described in claim 126 wherein the television signal is analog.

128. A system as described in claim 126, wherein the television signal is digital.

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129. A system as described in claim 115, wherein the broadcast system is selected from a group consisting of a terrestrial broadcast system, a satellite broadcast system, a cable distribution system, a fiberoptic distribution system, the Internet, a private network, and a public network.

5 130. A method for transmitting video programming and at least one address useable for retrieving over a network from at least one server on the network on-line visual information segments having content related to the video programming to a viewer, comprising the steps of:

10 broadcasting a signal carrying the video programming to a viewer for viewing; and sending to the viewer over the network in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming the at least one address for retrieving the on-line information segments from the at least one server,

wherein the on-line information segments are viewable by the viewer in respective predetermined timing relationship with the viewing of the video programming.

15 131. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the step of sending the at least one address comprises sending each one of the at least one address with an associated time indicia for controlling when each one of the at least one address is to be used for retrieval of respective ones of the on-line information segments so that the on-line information segments are viewable by the viewer in respective predetermined timing relationship with the viewing
20 of the video programming.

132. A method as described in claim 130, further comprising the step of creating at

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least certain ones of the on-line information segments retrievable from respective ones of the at least one server, and wherein at least one address sent to the viewer in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming is for retrieving the created on-line information segments.

5 133. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the network comprises the Internet, the at least one address comprises at least one uniform resource locator, the at least one network server comprises at least one Internet web site, and the on-line information segments comprise at least one web page retrievable over the Internet from respective ones of the at least one Internet web site using the at least one uniform resource locator.

10 134. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the video programming comprises educational subject matter.

 135. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the video programming comprises entertainment subject matter.

15 136. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the video programming comprises advertising subject matter.

 137. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the on-line information segments include a request for viewer response and wherein the network has a two-way capability enabling the viewer to enter information in response to the request included in the on-line information segments.

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138. A method as described in claim 137, wherein the request for viewer response is related to advertising subject matter of the video programming.

139. A method as described in claim 137, wherein the request for viewer response comprises an offer to sell a product or service and the viewer is enabled to enter response information making a purchase of the product or the service.

140. A method as described in claim 130, wherein the step of broadcasting a signal is selected from a group consisting of: terrestrial broadcasting, satellite broadcasting, distributing the signal by cable, distributing the signal by optical fiber, distributing the signal via the Internet, distributing the signal via a private network, and distributing the signal via a public network.

141. A system for transmitting video programming and at least one address useable for retrieving over a network from at least one server on the network on-line information segments having content related to the video programming, comprising:

an address source for providing the at least one address; and

a broadcast system for sending a signal carrying the video programming to a viewer, the broadcast system being responsive to the address source for encoding the signal to carry the at least one address in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming,

wherein the at least one address encoded in the signal may be extracted by a decoder from the signal, and the signal is provided to a receiver for presenting the video programming, and wherein the at least one address extracted from the signal may be used by a processor coupled

to the network to retrieve over the network the on-line information segments from the at least one server for viewing in respective predetermined timing relationship with the video programming.

142. A system as described in claim 141, wherein each one of the at least one address encoded by the broadcast system to be carried by the signal includes an associated time indicia for controlling when each one of the at least one address is to be used for retrieving respective ones of the on-line information segments so that the on-line information segments are retrieved for viewing in respective predetermined timing relationship with the video programming.

143. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the network is the Internet; the at least one address comprises at least one uniform resource locator; the at least one server comprises at least one Internet web site; and the on-line information segments comprise at least one web page retrievable from the at least one Internet web site using the at least one uniform resource locator.

144. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the decoder is located in proximity to the receiver and the processor.

145. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the decoder is located remotely from the receiver and the processor, and the at least one address extracted from the encoded signal is provided to the processor over the network.

146. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the broadcast system further comprises an encoder responsive to the address source for encoding the signal to carry the at least one address in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming.

147. A system as described in claim 142, wherein the broadcast system further comprises an encoder responsive to the address source for encoding the signal with the at least one uniform resource locator in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming.

148. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the video programming comprises entertainment subject matter.

149. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the video programming comprises educational subject matter.

150. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the video programming comprises advertising subject matter.

151. A system as described in claim 141, further comprising a computer on the network for creating at least certain ones of the on-line information segments retrievable from respective ones of the at least one server and storing the created on-line information segments at respective ones of the at least one server, wherein at least one address for retrieving the created on-line information segments is provided to the address source and encoded in the signal transmitted to the viewer in respective specified timing relationship with the video

programming.

152. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the broadcast system is a television transmission system, and the signal is a television signal.

153. A system as described in claim 152, wherein the television signal is analog.

154. A system as described in claim 152, wherein the television signal is digital.

155. A system as described in claim 141, wherein the broadcast system is selected from a group consisting of a terrestrial broadcast system, a satellite broadcast system, a cable distribution system, a fiberoptic distribution system, the Internet, a private network and a public network.

156. A system for transmitting to users video programming and at least one address useable for retrieving over a network from at least one network server on the network on-line information segments having content related to the video programming, comprising:

a broadcast system for sending a signal carrying the video programming to a viewer, the signal further carrying the at least one address encoded therein in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming,

wherein the at least one address encoded in the signal may be extracted by a decoder from the signal, and the signal is provided to a receiver for presentation of the video programming, and wherein the at least one address extracted from the signal may be used by a processor coupled to the network to retrieve over the network the on-line information

segments from the at least one server for displaying in respective predetermined timing relationship with the presentation of the video programming.

157. A system as described in claim 156, wherein each of the at least one address encoded by the broadcast system to be carried by the signal includes an associated time indicia controlling when each one of the at least one address is to be used to retrieve respective ones of the on-line information segments for display in respective predetermined timing relationship with the presentation of the video programming.

158. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the network is the Internet; the at least one address comprises at least one uniform resource locator; the at least one server comprises at least one Internet web site; and the on-line information segments comprise at least one web page retrievable from the at least one Internet web site using the at least one uniform resource locator.

159. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the decoder is located in proximity to the receiver and the processor.

160. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the decoder is located remotely from the receiver and the processor, and the at least one address extracted from the encoded signal is provided to the processor over the network.

161. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the broadcast system further comprises an encoder for encoding the signal to carry the at least one address in respective

specified timing relationship with the video programming.

162. A system as described in claim 157, wherein the broadcast system further comprises an encoder for encoding the signal with the at least one uniform resource locator in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming.

5 163. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the video programming comprises entertainment subject matter.

164. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the video programming comprises educational subject matter.

10 165. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the video programming comprises advertising subject matter.

166. A system as described in claim 156, further comprising a computer on the network for creating at least certain ones of the on-line information segments retrievable from respective ones of the at least one server and storing the created on-line information segments at respective ones of the at least one server, wherein at least one address for retrieving the
15 created on-line information segments is encoded in the signal transmitted to the viewer in respective specified timing relationship with the video programming.

167. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the broadcast system is a television transmission system, and the signal is a television signal.

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168. A system as described in claim 166, wherein the television signal is analog.

169. A system as described in claim 166, wherein the television signal is digital.

170. A system as described in claim 156, wherein the broadcast system is selected from a group consisting of a terrestrial broadcast system, a satellite broadcast system, a cable distribution system, a fiberoptic distribution system, the Internet, a private network and a public network.

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ABSTRACT

A system for integrating video programming with the vast information resources of the Internet. A computer-based system receives a video program with embedded uniform resource locators (URLs). The URLs, the effective addresses of locations or Web sites on the Internet, are interpreted by the system and direct the system to the Web site locations to retrieve related Web pages. Upon receipt of the Web pages by the system, the Web pages are synchronized to the video content for display. The video program signal can be displayed on a video window on a conventional personal computer screen. The actual retrieved Web pages are time stamped to also be displayed, on another portion of the display screen, when predetermined related video content is displayed in the video window. As an alternative, the computer-based system receives the URLs directly through an Internet connection, at times specified by TV broadcasters in advance. The system interprets the URLs and retrieves the appropriate Web pages. The Web pages are synchronized to the video content for display in conjunction with a television program being broadcast to the user at that time. This alternative system allows the URLs to be entered for live transmission to the user.

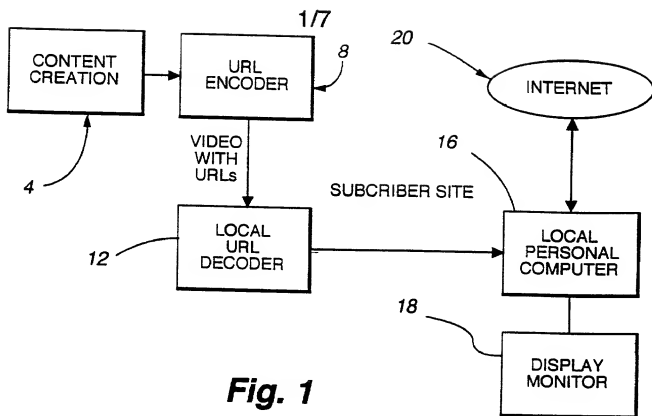


Fig. 1

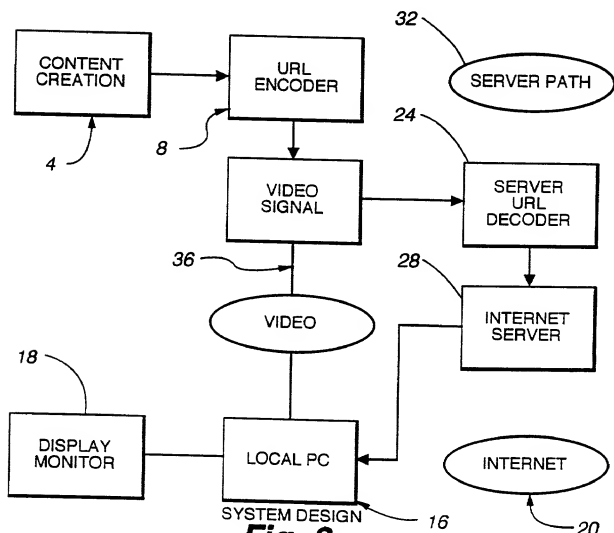
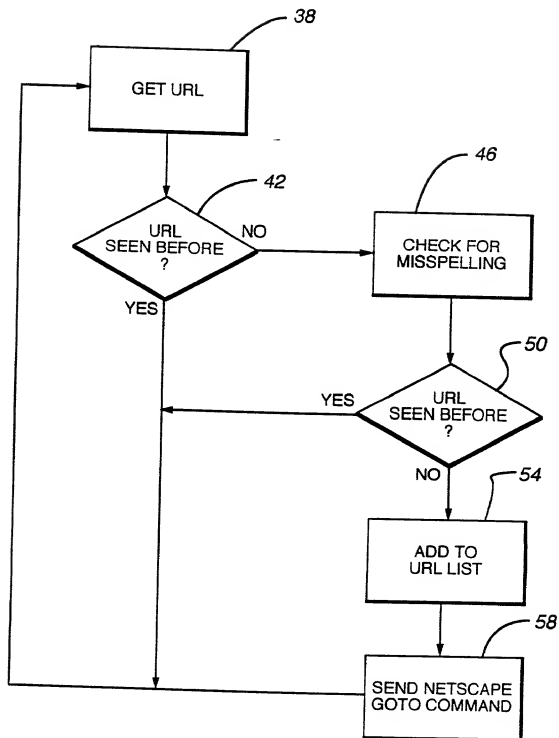


Fig. 2



SOFTWARE DESIGN

Fig. 3

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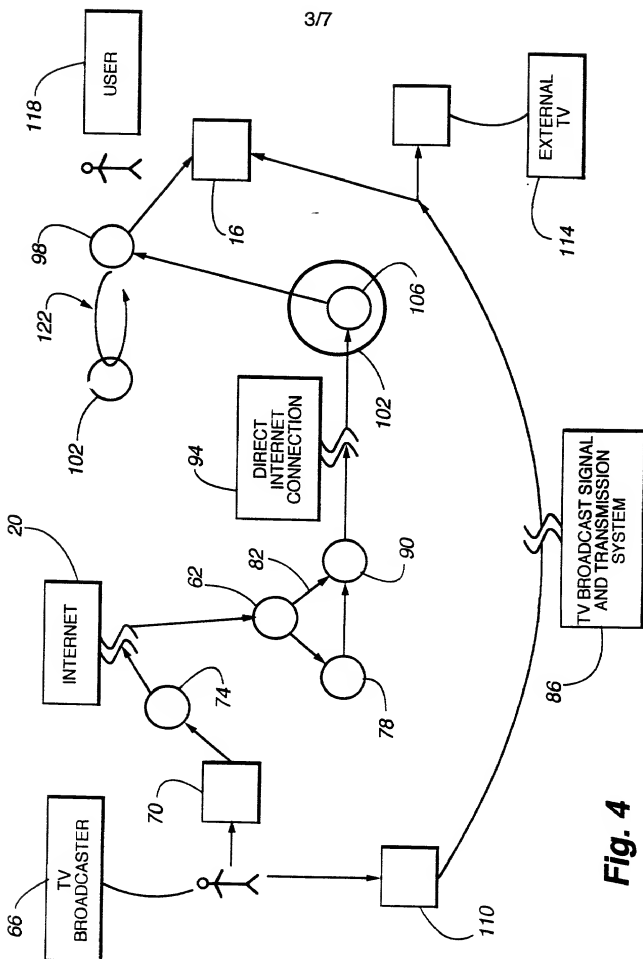


Fig. 4

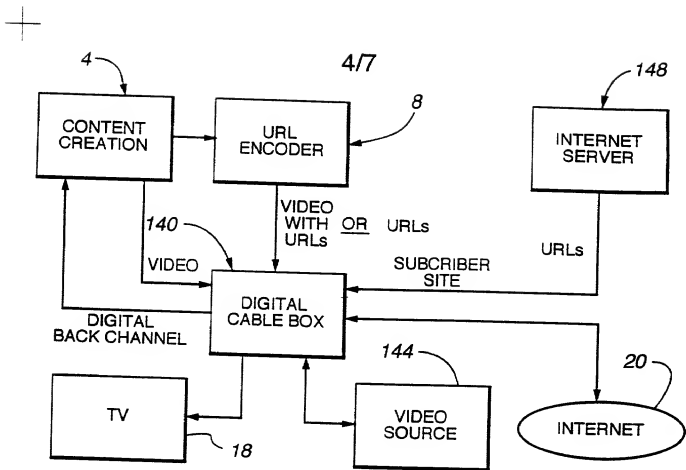


Fig. 5

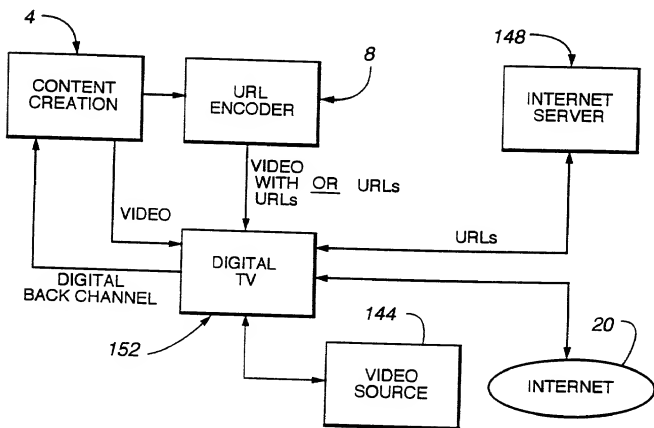


Fig. 6

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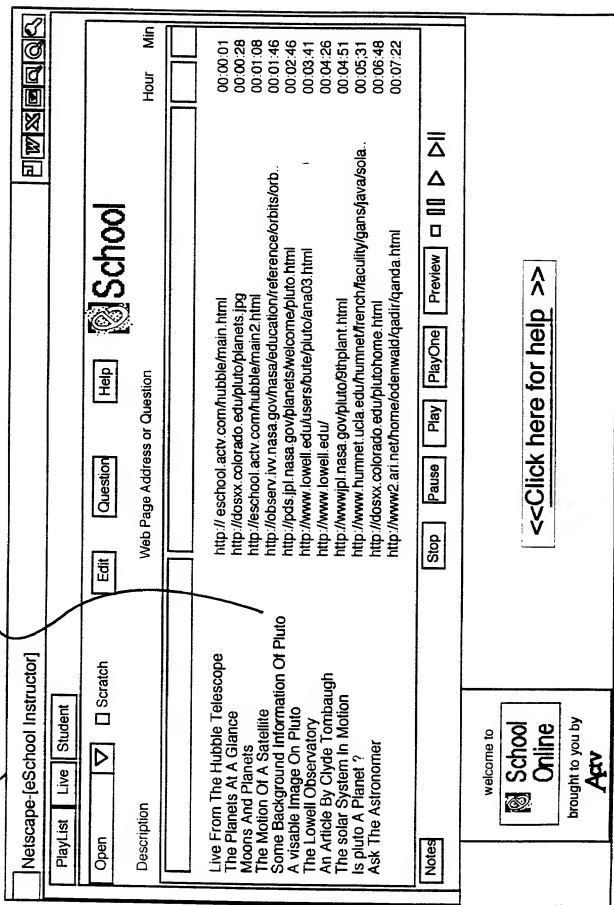


Fig. 7



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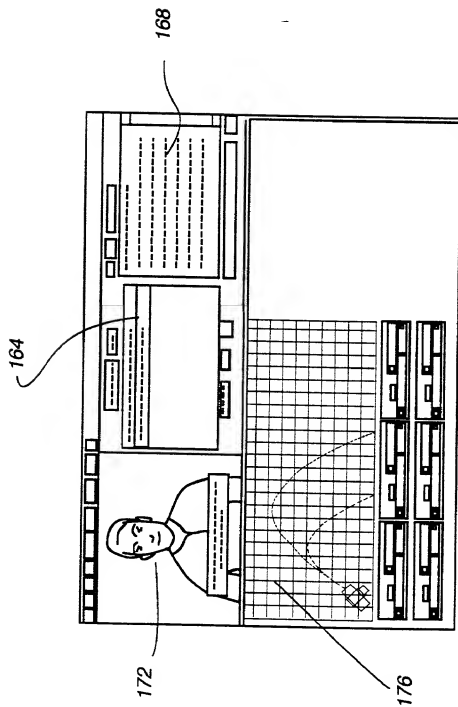
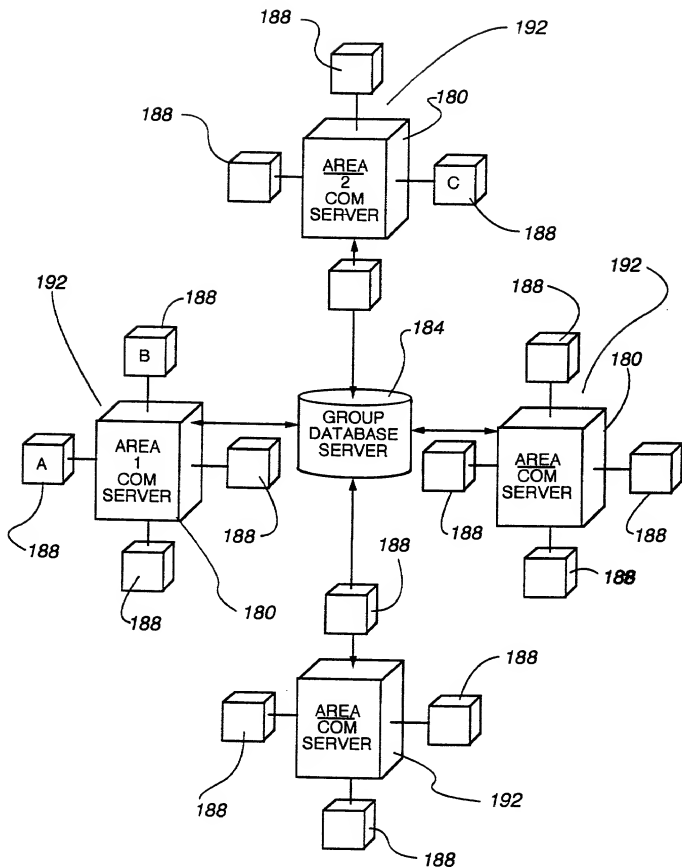


Fig. 8



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**Fig. 9**

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Docket No.
4247.02

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

ENHANCED VIDEO PROGRAMMING SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR INCORPORATING AND DISPLAYING RETRIEVED INTEGRATED INTERNET INFORMATION SEGMENTS

the specification of which

(check one)

☐ is attached hereto.

☒ was filed on July 6, 1998 as United States Application No. or PCT International Application Number 09/109,945 and was amended on _____

(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

_____	_____
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)
_____	_____
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)
_____	_____
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U. S. C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C. F. R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application:

08/615,143	03/14/96	pending
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status)
		(patented, pending, abandoned)
08/613,144	03/08/96	abandoned
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status)
		(patented, pending, abandoned)
_____	_____	_____
(Application Serial No.)	(Filing Date)	(Status)
		(patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that wilful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such wilful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. *(list name and registration number)*

Customer No. 20686

Send Correspondence to: **Customer No. 20686**

Direct Telephone Calls to: *(name and telephone number)*
Scott W. Doyle (303) 628-1504

Full name of sole or first inventor

Craig Ullman

8/3/98

Sole or first inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Brooklyn, New York

Citizenship

USA

Post Office Address

~~760 1st Street~~

112 William St. #4th

~~Brooklyn, NY 11203~~

Brooklyn NY 11201

Full name of second inventor, if any

Jack D. Hidary *(see attached duplicate page 3)*

Second inventor's signature

Date

Residence

New York, New York

Citizenship

USA

Post Office Address

320 East 46th Street, Apt. 8A

New York, NY 10017


POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. *(list name and registration number)*

Customer No. 20686

Send Correspondence to: Customer No. 20686

Direct Telephone Calls to: *(name and telephone number)*
 Scott W. Doyle (303) 628-1504

Full name of sole or first inventor Craig Ullman	
Sole or first inventor's signature	Date
Residence Brooklyn, New York	
Citizenship USA	
Post Office Address 76 State Street	
Brooklyn, NY 11203	

Full name of second inventor, if any Jack D. Hidary	
Second inventor's signature 	Date 9/15/98
Residence New York, New York	
Citizenship USA	
Post Office Address 320 East 46th Street, Apt. 8A	
New York, NY 10017	

Full name of third inventor, if any

Nova T. Spivack

Third inventor's signature

Residence

New York, New York

Citizenship

USA

Post Office Address

184 Thompson Street, Apt. 4G

New York, NY 10012

Date

8/13/98

Full name of fourth inventor, if any

Fourth inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

Full name of fifth inventor, if any

Fifth inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address

Full name of sixth inventor, if any

Sixth inventor's signature

Date

Residence

Citizenship

Post Office Address